



Montgomery County Council

News Release

July 23, 2002

COUNCILMEMBER DACEK JOINS COMMUTERS ON NEW FREE SHUTTLE SERVICE FROM GERMANTOWN TO SHADY GROVE METRO

*“Free Wheeling” Days Started by Council
Expand This Month to East County*

Councilmember Nancy Dacek joined Upcounty commuters on the front and back ends of their commutes today to highlight the success of the Council’s “Free Wheeling” days of free and reduced bus service to encourage transit use in the I-270 – and to talk about its expansion to the Route 29 corridor in the East County this month.

“More people using mass transit is good for everyone,” said Councilmember Dacek, on boarding the #77 bus at the Germantown Transit Center, bound for the Shady Grove Metro. “Folks who use mass transit can leave their cars at home. Those who cannot use mass transit have fewer people on the roads.

“Transit isn’t a cure-all, but it’s a key piece of the Council program of new roads, enhanced transit, and improvements to existing roads.

“That’s why the Council initiated this experiment with free and reduced fares on 11 routes along the highly-trafficked I-270 corridor last year. And that’s why, after the County Executive eliminated funding for the program in his budget proposal this spring, the Council put it back in.

“The results are in and it’s working. Ridership is up 18 percent on the free and reduced routes.”

Starting last October, the County began offering free service on Routes 70, 72, 73, 75, and 79 in the I-270 corridor. A reduced one-way fare is also offered on the Maryland Transit Administration’s commuter route 991. Fares were reduced to 50 cents on Metrobus routes J8 and J9 and on the 14C and 14D SmartMover in Montgomery County.

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"It's working so well that the Council decided to expand the program to include the Route 29 area in the East County," said Councilmember Dacek, who serves on the Transportation Planning Board of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

"Effective this month, all fares on the ten Metrobus 'Z' routes in the Route 29 corridor are reduced from \$1.10 to 50 cents. That, along with other measures, can help us make a difference in relieving congestion along 29."

For the budget year beginning this month, the Council approved \$300,000 for the program in the I-270 corridor and \$250,000 for the East County service.

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